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585 placed, being rubbed all over with *mòhua* oil and turmeric paste by unmarried girls, three such baths follow the similar ablution of a trio of married couples, each succeeding the bridegroom's bath, one after another. Now the bridegroom's father takes care to provide the procession that is now being formed, with sufficient rice (say half a maund), *dal* (pulse) and other food-stuff for the feast of the party.

The procession now starts with a great deal of eclat. Kettle drums, and cymbals beat to the accompaniment of merry music. The boys and girls of the tribe dance along, regardless of the fire-works that go on. A bullock cart contains older folk; and the bridegroom, carrying a betel-nut cracker, is conveyed on a palanquin.

Seta Bapla, Daiban Bapla and Matkòm Bapla

585 588 856 Now if the bridegroom or the bride in childhood had his or her teeth in the upper gum first, custom requires that he or she should at first be married to a dog. This is called *Seta Bapla*. Similarly, the bridegroom or the bride may be married to a *Daiban* tree (Oriya, *Sahara* tree) or a *Matkòm* tree (Mòhua, *Bassia Latifolia*) to ward off the evil effects of the inauspicious sign of their childhood.

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Procedure

In case of the *Daihan Bapla*, the party goes to a *Daihan* tree with the bride or bridegroom, while music goes on. The bride (or bridegroom) and the tree are then besmeared with turmeric paste and clothed with new cloths amidst *Itut Sindur* songs, while the bride puts vermilion on the trunk of the tree. A marriage on similar lines may be gone through with either a male or a female dog (in case of a bride and bridegroom respectively); but it must be performed in the courtyard of the boy or girl to be so married. *Matkòm Bapla* or marriage with a *mòhua* tree, requires that the party should go to a *mòhua* tree with *hàṇḍia* and new cloth. Thereafter, the mother of the bridegroom (or bride) applies turmeric paste on the tree and on the person of the bride-groom (or the bride). They then circle round the tree seven times amidst music and dances. 585 588.

The procession then reaches the village of the bride. There, they are welcomed cordially and housed separately. Special songs called *Manduar*, (*Maṇḍwa* (?) temporary shed erected on the occasion of a marriage) sung jointly by both the parties follow a hearty repast, till the bride is made ready for the marriage. 585 [533]

As they advance towards the bride's house, a party of revellers obstruct them. They would not allow them (bridegroom's party) to pass on if the [524]

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585 524 latter cannot answer a battery of riddles to their satisfaction. A sample of such a riddle may prove interesting reading.

Question

[539] "Sather mahisi panara kila bejor kari bundhre bala ?" (There are sixty buffaloes and fifteen posts. Can you tie them in odd numbers ?).

Now the proper answer to this riddle is to repeat the very same question with an emphasis on "jor" in "bejor" which will imply that you can tie them by force. Questions like this are put every three or four steps that the procession may advance and amidst a good deal of these amusing blockades, the party of the bridegroom reaches the bride's house at night.

585 The next step, an important one, involves the inspection of the *gònòñ* (bride-price) articles by the bride's people, the unsatisfactory ones being returned forthwith for being replaced ; and when they are thought to be all right, *Gònòñ Toṛaoni* (being food and liquor given to the bridegroom's party on payment in full of the bride-price) is supplied to the bridegroom's party. Meanwhile, the bridegroom shines as the observed of all observers in a booth, (maṇḍwa) in front of the bride's house. Now, the [588] bride will have her first marriage with a *mòhua* tree (Santali, *Mathòm*, *Bassia Latifolia*, Roxb.), called

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Matkòm Bapla (marriage) or *Seta Bapla* or *Daiban Bapla* as described before. The bridegroom will change his turban with his *Sala* (brother-in-law) and preparations are now afoot for the most important ceremony, *Sindrà dan* (smearing the bride's forehead with vermilion). 585 [588]

Next, the bride is taken outside in a procession. The couple, wearing yellow clothes of an incomplete texture, are now made to meet half-way. A cloth is placed midway between the bride and the bridegroom and moved thrice in a circular way. The bride sits on a basket (*daura*) held up by the bridegroom's elder brother, and other members of the bridegroom's party ; while the bridegroom is carried on the shoulder of his *teñañ* (sister's husband). The couple move round thrice, while they (both the bride and the bridegroom) mutually throw sun-dried rice on their persons. The bridegroom next faces east, while the bride faces west. A man now brings a pot of spring-water with mango-twigs (with leaves). The bridegroom sprinkles the water through the mango-leaves on the bride. The bride does similarly.

Next, the bridegroom takes some vermilion with his middle finger and throws it on the ground. After this, he applies some vermilion on the bride's forehead amidst three shouts of *haribol* from those present.

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585 valent Hindu forms. Many of the ceremonials as
177 the application of vermilion to the bride's forehead, have been traced directly to Hindu influences.
585 This *sindur dan* or *sindrà dan* is a remnant of the
174 primitive custom of mixing the blood of the husband
177 and wife, which they either drank or daubed themselves with, as a symbol of an eternal union. As it is a queer problem to discover whether the egg came first or the hen was first, ethnologists have in their turn, traced Dravidian influences in the custom. Similarly, the marriage with a *mòhua* [171] tree, the race of the husband and wife while at the [588] ceremony, called *Kado ghata*, have their parallel in the customs of the Hindus of the Central belt.

II. LOVE MARRIAGE

(1) Raja Raji

583 The freedom of social intercourse that the
[834] Santals allow to their boys and girls, naturally leads to many love-marriages ; but the Santals, even when in love, have to go through certain formalities
583 before living as man and wife. So we see that
584 when a couple feel the urge for matrimony, they go
[622] to the house of the village Headman and inform him of their desire. The Headman now will take them to the house of the lover and there, in the presence of the village elders, the beloved is asked

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One scrutinising the attendant marriage ceremonials must be struck by the fact that many of them aim at the union of the souls of the married couple along with their physical bodies. The tying of the ends of the cloths worn by the husband and the wife and their eating together, are instances on the point. Something more than this is sought after to ensure the steadfast obedience of the wife to the husband when the former eats a meal soaked in the water with which her husband's feet have been washed. 585 182

The same anxiety for the future welfare of the married couple is revealed in processes to guard the luck, and to exclude the evil omens, as by the beneficent and luck-conferring virtues of the mango-twigs in a water-pot. And we must not forget that omen-reading is the first essential of all Santal marriages. In this respect, they go so far as to marry the parties to dogs or trees to do away with the supposed evil effects of their teeth having appeared earlier in the upper gum. Nor must we overlook the fact that the married couple not only belong to each other but to the wider life of the clan and the tribe. This communion of the bride with her husband's people is ensured by the girl offering rice-beer and tooth-sticks to the bridegroom's party. And by ceremonial baths and anointing the body with turmeric paste, the Santals [777] [152] [783] [824] [787] [588] [783]

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uncanny part of the whole problem is that they assume human shapes, and thus like to enter into marital union with Santals of the opposite sexes. But the most

A perusal of the stories relating to *Boŋgas* reveals that in their houses the *Boŋgas* have strange coiled up seats as hoods of serpents (*Boŋga gando*, in Mayurbhanj Santali), near which, fearful tigers* and leopards crouch, spreading consternation to the human beings kidnapped. They eat like men, but when their dinner is brought into this earth of ours, lo and behold! it will change into leaves and cow-dung, in the twinkling of an eye. Unions between human beings and *Boŋgas* have their temporal advantages, and we see how during the pendency of a liaison between a Santal and a *Boŋga*-girl, all his affairs prospered beyond expectation.

The *modus operandi* of *Boŋga*-lovers in forming such unions is seen in the story of how a *Boŋga*-girl,

* On this point Mr. Samra Mañjhi of Bantali, Rairangpur, Mayurbhanj stated as follows:—

Some Boŋgas have their serpents, tigers, deer and bears as their workers. The serpents are their seats, the tigers are their dogs, the deer are their oxen and the bears are their servants. The beasts do not always remain in the Boŋgas' house. They roam about the jungles, but they remain under their master's control. Whenever the Boŋga calls on them, they are present, ready to carry out his orders. In Santali, the serpents are called *Boŋga gando*, the tigers are *gutrut seta*, the deer *Keda* and *dari* and the bears are *Kanmi*.

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776 inhabiting a spring, cast a spell on a Santal youth
539 on whom she had taken a fancy. The boy found
588 himself spirited away into a pool, where he found dry land and many houses. There he lived with the girl for a long time, forgetting everything of this earth, in merry chases with tigers as hunting-dogs, (*Gutrut seta*, as called by Mayurbhanj Santals).

The special vision, thus obtained, helped him to see how there were crowds of *Boṅgas* living in villages like men. He had the strange knowledge that in December, when Santals thresh rice, the *Boṅgas* carry off half of it.

776 But the saving grace of the whole situation is
539 that these thieves can be detected by human beings. Thus we learn of a Boundary *Boṅga* being overheard by a Santal, while maturing a plan of theft with his wife. The *Boṅga* was thus baulked of his impious intentions by the farmer, who harvested his corn during the temporary absence of the godling, taking care to sacrifice a pig and offering a plate of flour to his might-have-been spoiler.

Witch-Craft Stories

754 From the several stories relating to witch-craft, we gather that the Santal women learnt the art from Maraṅ Buru and how they decoy little girls and teach them the craft, so that it may not die out.

This initiation has its weird aspect. For we see,

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youth who proposes a mating and is refused does not mind it seriously. It seems that another successful intrigue would cure the temporary disappointment. But should the boy who proposes, be in real love with the girl, he feels shocked and many such cases end in tragedies. One such concrete case was mentioned to us by some old Santals as having occurred at Jorku, Baripada, where a lad in love with a married girl asked her to leave the village. She having refused, the boy committed suicide by hanging. We closely questioned educated Santals to find out experiences of a deeper character. But all that we gathered was that ties of the heart apparently very deep, slacken with time and life-long devotion to the lover or beloved, should the lovers be compelled to marry others, is rarely to be found. An educated Santal told us a story of a love-affair between two prohibited clans viz. Tuḍus and Besras. He said that his cousin (a Tuḍu) married a Besra girl because he was in love, not minding the antagonism of the society. The lover declared that he would defy death for the sake of the girl. But the romance was shortlived. The girl did not live long. She died and the customary belief that such marriages are unlucky, had its triumph.

Whatever that may be, we consider it almost a reflection upon human nature that there are no

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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mysteries of witchcraft. When girls are initiated into witchcraft they are taken away by force, and are taken to all the most powerful *bongas* in succession, and taught to invoke them. They are also taught *mantras* and songs and by degrees they cease to be afraid. The beginner is made to come out of the house with a lamp in her hand and a broom tied round her waist. She is then conducted to the great *bongas*, one of whom approves of her and when all have agreed she is married to that *bonga*. After this she can also marry a man in the usual way. When the girl has learnt everything she is made to take her *Sidalang* (degree) by supposedly taking out a man's liver and cooking it with rice in a new pot; then she and the young woman who is initiating her, eat the feast together; a woman who has eaten one such stew is said to be completely proficient and can never forget what she learnt. If any girl refuses to take the final step and will not eat human flesh she is caused to turn mad or commit suicide. Those however who have once eaten human flesh acquire a craving for it.

Should any outsider happen to come their way during these dances and sacrifices, the stranger is challenged and if he be found to be a mere wayfarer and not an inquisitive spy, he is warned on pain of death not to speak to any one of what he may have seen or heard. On his promising not to utter a word about it he is permitted to depart. Should he prove faithless, it is said, he is sure to be killed by magic. I am citing below a story about this from Bompass (Folklore of the Santal Parganas).

In the village of Mohulpahari there was a youth named Jebra. One night when he was coming back